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The Destruction of Tongariki

Emily Ross Mulloy

While our family was on Rapanui in 1960, we experienced the result of an earthquake in southern Chile. The effects on the island came in the form of a maremoto or tsunami, what is popularly but incorrectly known as a "tidal wave." The account which follows is from a letter sent to our families in the United States on one of the few occasions that mail could be sent: by the Chilean Navy training ship, Esmeralda, upon its return to the island from Tahiti. The letter is dated 15 June 1960, although it had been written over a period of several weeks.

"The most exciting event of the past month was the tidal wave on May 22, following the earthquake which took place in Chile. I imagine you have had more information about those than we have, since our news sources are pretty limited.

"On Sunday night we were just getting ready to have supper when some kids outside started hollering for us to come out and look at the beach. [We were living in a rented house across the street from the present post office, then as now the home of Nicholas Haoa and Rosita Cardinali, owners of the Hotel Otai.] When we first looked, the rocks a little way from shore, which normally stand several meters above the high tide line, had completely disappeared. The stone pier was covered with water, and the water was level with the base of the statue which is set up at the end of the street we live on. By the time we had collected everyone in the family and gone down to see, the water had all gone out again, and lots of little kids and big people too were poking around in the pools to find fish, etc., which had been washed up. Then in about 15 minutes it rose again, everyone ran for high ground and, though it never again got as high as the first wave, it continued sucking out and coming in all that evening from

seven until about midnight. Each time when the waves went out they went out much farther than the real low tide level, so that all the area between the normal shoreline and the previously mentioned offshore rocks, was practically drained of water.

"I think that by eight or nine o'clock, the entire pueblo was down here by the waterfront, and of course we were, too. People brought torches of rags dipped in gasoline, primus lamps, carbide lamps, flashlights, etc., and in the intervals when the sea went down they were scrambling around on the exposed rocks, catching the stranded fish, lobsters, crabs, octopus, etc., and a lot of people, including Martin Rapu's father [Alejo Rapu], stayed down here all night. There is evidently a sort of superstitious belief that they have to stay

there and pray or chant in order to prevent the sea from coming up higher. It is something that has happened before. In fact, we were told that several years ago the water came up and covered the soccer field and got almost to the old cemetery (which is just a few feet lower than the level of this house) but, in some of the results, which we didn't find out until later, this was much more disastrous. "No one here was drowned, and no one's home was

washed away, but on the other side of the island, perhaps because it was the side facing the continent and got the first shock of the wave, a great deal of damage was done. The first result that anyone knew about, except of course for the big supply of fish, was next morning when it became apparent that the sea had brought in a lot of sand to the beach down here, sucked it up from deeper parts and deposited it on top of and among the rocks. This was a big piece of luck for the island government and also for all the private individuals who are planning construction, since you need sand for cement and before it had to be hauled in from the other side of the island in oxcarts or, in the case of the government, in jeeps with trailers. So for almost all the following week, all the able bodied men, women and children were down shovelling sand, piling it up to dry and



A view of the ruins of Tongariki as it looks today. Gigantic statues lie where they were tossed by the tsunami.

then loading it in oxcarts or trailers to be hauled to the various places where it was needed. Martin [Rapu] is building a new house and was able to get all the sand he needed for his cement work and spent a lot of time down there as he was also collecting sand for the Air Force and then, when off duty, was collecting for himself.

"Thursday of that week was a holiday, some sort of religious day, I'm not sure which, and as it turned out to be a really beautiful day as well, we spent most of it at the beach. We also had a lot of company, among them Guillermo Nahoe's parents [Juan and Josefina Paté], and it was from his father that we got the details of what had happened on the other side of the island. There, in the bay of Hotu Iti, which is on the coast behind the volcanoes Rano Raraku and Poike, the sea had risen 13 meters above its normal level and covered a very large area, going in some spots as much as 700 meters inland, and completely destroying the largest (and previously one of the best preserved) *ahu* on the island, Tongariki. While it did not have the beautiful Inca-like stone work of Vinapu, it did have 15 *moai*, all in very good condition although tipped over, and a high masonry platform of at least seven courses of stone. The shepherders unfortunately didn't get over to this part of the island until Tuesday or Wednesday so hundreds of lobsters and thousands of fish which were washed up at this and other points along the east coast were completely wasted.

"On the Monday following, Kathy [my daughter] and I went over to Hotu Iti with Gonzalo Figueroa in a jeep borrowed from the Air Force and a bunch of airforce men, including Martin, Arsenio Rapu, and Juan and Jorge Edmunds, and had a chance to see the destruction at first hand. I had previously seen Tongariki only in pictures, since this was a part of the island we hadn't yet visited. (I also got my first look at Rano Raraku, the famous statue quarry, the one part of the island where all of the photos are taken). The [Tongariki] *ahu* no longer has as many as two stones piled of top of each other, so that you could tell this used to be the wall. Not only that but the huge *moai*, some of them 18 to 20 feet tall, had been lifted, rolled over, and washed inland and left lying, in some cases as much as 100 meters from their original position. Normally when they were tipped over during prehistoric warfare the *moai* ended up face down, but the tidal wave had rolled some over onto their backs so we were able to see the beautiful carving of the faces. One had its eye holes filled with water (sea water? or rain, perhaps, as it had rained a lot in the meantime) and lay face up to reflect the sky!

"The whole area of Hotu Iti is quite low and is covered with rocks, boulders from offshore, stones from the *ahu*, stones from the various modern stone walls around the area mixed with bones and skulls from the tombs which had been located under the *moai* after they were overturned in the period of intertribal warfare, along with bones of dead

sheep, rotten fish, lobsters, eels, sea cucumbers, sea urchins, octopus, and lots of dried seaweed. It really was an indescribable mess. By the time we got there more than a week after, it was easy to see the area which the sea water had covered as it killed the grass and other plants and they had turned yellow over the whole area. Of a couple of caves along the shore, one had been completely filled with rocks so that, if Martin hadn't told us, we wouldn't have known it was a cave; while the other, a little higher, had simply been filled with seaweed and dead fish.

"The object of the trip was to take back to town some of the skulls and other bones that had been washed out of the tombs as well as to bring back various smaller carved stones that had turned up. Presumably, these were things that had been built into the walls of the big *ahu*, as they are of a more archaic style. Since they are small enough to be portable, it was thought best to bring them back to the government headquarters building and keep them here until the planned museum is built. They would be too tempting for unscrupulous people to haul off to sell to tourists. When I say small, I don't mean you could put them in your pocket; the largest was, I suppose, about 4 feet tall, and the smallest was a head about 18 inches diameter, so it was an all-day job packing and loading them and required two trips with the jeep and trailer to haul all the stuff. We stayed over there while the jeep went back with one load and took some pictures although it was a very overcast day and so I didn't try to go up to the side of Rano Raraku and take more pictures of that much photographed spot (although I'm sure sooner or later we will have to have our pictures taken alongside a *moai*, or no one will believe we have been here!) The weather has not been at its best for picture taking lately and, of course, exciting events (such as the tidal wave) which might make good movies, always occur after dark or on rainy days."

The *tsunami* of May 1960 is still considered the largest and most destructive of any recorded in the Pacific. Its effects reached as far west as New Zealand and as far north as Alaska. Sixty residents of Hawaii were killed and much of the waterfront of Hilo was destroyed. Property damage was also heavy in coastal Japan where some 200 lost their lives and 50,000 were left homeless.

Author's note: individuals mentioned in the text: Alejo Rapu: patriarch of the family with whom Bill had been most closely associated during the 1955 expedition; Martin Rapu: son of Alejo. Bill's foreman in the work at Vinapu in 1955-56, he accompanied the expedition to Pūcaim, Mangareva, Tubuai, Rapa, Raivavae, etc. After returning to Chile, he enlisted in the airforce and was on the island in 1960. Guillermo Nahoe: nephew of Martin, also in the airforce but in continental Chile in 1960. He later became our son-in-law and father of our grandchildren, Pancho and Josie. Juan Nahoe: son of Alejo, half-brother of Martin, and father of Guillermo; Josefina Paté, his wife. Arsenio Rapu: youngest son of Alejo, half-brother of Martin and Juan, etc. Also an airforce enlisted man stationed on the island.

Contemplate The Navel of the World

William Mulloy

...continued from the Vol.5(2) issue of RNJ

More recent events are beginning to suggest that in a typically human fashion few lessons were learned from this devastating past. Several things suggest that this unfortunate history could repeat itself. In 1888 the Navel of the World became part of the Republic of Chile and was used until recently as a sheep ranch. Some of the islanders found work as ranch hands and at other new tasks to supplement their fishing and planting on the again abundant land. The Catholic faith had been introduced, and many of the technological and other ideas of foreign civilization, including its medical techniques, gradually began to be felt more intensively. With land and the resources of the sea again ample to support the tiny remaining community, the future seemed bright. A will to survive gradually regenerated. In 1886 the population had been 155; by 1900 it had reached 213, by 1934, 456, by 1955, 842, and by 1969, 1,432. There are now 1,619 islanders and since 1877 there has been an annual increase of nearly 5 percent. If the trend continues there will be over 2,200 islanders in another ten years and in thirty years their numbers will approach six thousand. Immigration from continental Chile, which is already beginning, will augment this increase significantly. With present intensified outside contacts Ehrlich's predictions would suggest that this time the fate of the Navel of the World may be indistinguishably merged in a worldwide population explosion.

In 1955-56 an archaeological expedition directed by Thor Heyerdahl spent five months on the island. The best seller *Aku-Aku*, which was one of its results, focused worldwide attention in this direction. Gradually it began to be realized that this island held the most remarkable potential open air museum of Polynesian history to be found anywhere. Even so, it seemed unlikely that many visitors would ever be able to cross the vast distances involved to see this most isolated of islands. The single annual supply ship of that time could carry few passengers beyond those required for special tasks. Nevertheless, the slice of history illustrated here was of such absorbing interest that in 1960 the University of Chile sent Gonzalo Figueroa, one of their archaeologists, and the writer to experiment with the problem of monument restoration and to determine if such work could be carried out at reasonable cost. During that year the equinox-oriented Ahu a Kivi, with a platform about 270 feet long, and bearing seven approximately sixteen-ton statues, was completely restored. The statues were raised without heavy equipment, by methods similar to those used by the prehistoric islanders. The smaller Ahu Vaiteka was also restored. This experiment

produced, from a pile of rubble, the first intact Easter Island *ahu* to be seen in modern times. It impressed the islanders, many of whom were strongly moved by this visual evidence of their former capacities and achievements. The artistic and architectural merit, especially of Ahu a Kivi, clearly underscored the value of continued work. The President of Chile requested that the Museums and Monuments Division of Unesco send representatives to draw up plans for conservation and restoration on a larger scale. Plans were prepared for converting the island into an outdoor museum, and about thirty years of survey, investigation, stabilization, and restoration work were projected.

The very isolation of the island eventually brought its own solution to the problem of visitor access. As the only land in this part of the world, it was recognized as an essential route stop for trans-South Pacific flights joining South America with Australia and Southeast Asia. This base would forge the final link in the airline girdle of the Southern Hemisphere. In April 1966 LAN Chile Airlines inaugurated weekly flights to the island, which now go on to Tahiti to make connection with points farther west. There are now two scheduled flights each week. Tourists in considerable numbers have already begun to contemplate the Navel of the World, many as part of trans-Pacific trips. They have carried away enthusiastic stories of what they have seen.

Such contacts, and the prospect of increased future ones, have made imperative an acceleration of conservation and restoration work as well as all the typical measures for reception of visitors. The International Fund for Monuments, Inc., with partial support from the University of Wyoming and the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities, has been working in cooperation with the National Planning Office and the Bureau of Archives, Libraries and Museums of the Republic of Chile. A field party, directed by the writer, has worked intermittently on the island from February 1968 to the present. An exhaustive archaeological survey is under way that will eventually provide a precise inventory of the locations and conservation needs of the thousands of monuments. Though still only partially complete, the survey has recorded unexpected numbers of hitherto unnoticed villages and isolated domestic establishments among the spectacular monuments. These closely spaced and long abandoned homesteads wordlessly reveal intensive prehistoric land use and a population desperate for agricultural productivity. Such information will eventually shed clear light on the still enigmatic question of just what the maximum population of the island was.

The party also nearly completely restored the spectacular ceremonial center called Tahai just north of Hangaroa, the island's one modern town located on the west coast. Here may be seen in restored condition the three great *ahu* called Ko te Riku, Tahai, and Vai Uri, bearing in all seven gigantic statues, of which the largest weighs over twenty tons and

wears a *pukao* or red scoria topknot. Associated with these are many smaller structures related to the complex, including a paved ramp for bringing canoes ashore, masonry-modified caves, house foundations, and more enigmatic structures. More recently Ahu Huri a Urenga east of Hangaroa and two others near Ahu a Kapu on the west coast have been restored. These and the earlier restorations as well bring sharply to mind the *mana* relied upon in the old days as inexhaustible supernatural power. Here it continues to live perhaps as a memorial to an ambitious and vigorous society that tried and came within a hair's breadth of failure.

The failure was not quite complete. Perhaps the *mana* of the statues continues to look after its own. There is no doubt that from the 111 survivors of 1877 has developed a new island community at least as vigorous, ambitious, and intelligent as were their prehistoric ancestors. Present developments reveal the beginning of a second approach to an optimum period perhaps similar to that before the great battle at Poike. The islanders are more prosperous than they have been for a long time. Everyone is working enthusiastically. Roads have been built over many parts of the island. An airstrip suitable for jet planes has been completed. A hotel with sixty rooms is now in operation. Hangaroa now has a new and excellent school and considerable numbers of young islanders are being sent to continental Chile for higher education. Many of the technical characteristics of civilization unknown only a few years ago, such as piped water, electricity, and tape recorders, are now commonplace. For whatever it may eventually mean the long isolation of the islanders is at an end. They are now irrevocably part of the twentieth century. The problem of their survival has merged with that of the world at large.

With the entry of a money economy, rising aspirations, and other effects of outside contacts an important imperative emerges clearly. The extreme remoteness of the island and the limitations of its tiny environment make it very difficult to produce and market competitively any product capable of maintaining sufficient cash income to secure for the islanders an adequately supplied twentieth century life. Sheep raising has been tried and found to be uneconomic, as well as productive of devastating erosion problems. Systematic fishing, especially of tuna, may eventually be a partial solution, though the lack of good anchorages poses a difficulty. Systematic production of coffee or other crops might be helpful. However, the problem as a whole seems to find no facile solutions in such areas as these.

The people of Chile appear to be uniformly proud of and interested in this small segment of Polynesia that rather unexpectedly forms a part of their country and in recent years their government has heavily subsidized its development. However, as in all other parts of the world, if its people are to achieve the dignity of good and full lives the island must eventually become self-supporting.

It would seem that the ancient *mana* of the statues must still be relied upon to support the well-being of this isolated community. Clearly the most readily apparent economic future would seem to arise from a new kind of dependence on the monuments of their past achievements in the form of tourism. Happily in this area they have something valuable and unique to offer and it is as accessible as a major trans-Pacific air route can make it.

The island represents by all odds the most spectacular potential outdoor museum to be found anywhere in Polynesia. It not only illustrates a unique slice of Polynesian prehistory; for the thoughtful visitor, it has the deeper theoretical significance of being perhaps the world's best example of the development of a complex culture in great isolation.

Beyond its primary archaeological attractions the island has many dividends to offer the tourist; it is, quite simply, a rewarding place to be. Fishing, horseback riding, hiking, and camping can be enjoyed in a unique and satisfying environment in the company of people who, as typical Polynesians, are probably the most unconsciously accomplished hosts and the most outgoing and pleasant companions to be found anywhere.

With these essential advantages in this area it would seem that the economic future of the islanders is secure and so it probably is. The mechanisms of tourism are already beginning to develop. Several groups of islanders have banded together as tour companies to provide vehicle transportation to view the monuments. Beyond the accommodations available at the hotel, many islanders have modified their homes to receive guests. Others produce carved wooden figurines in the endless traditional motifs--art objects of which some have real merit by any standard of comparison. These and related occupations have already produced significant new local income though it would seem that the surface of the possibilities has hardly been scratched.

This orientation will require much future development. Because the prehistoric conflicts have left most of the spectacular monuments so destroyed as to obscure the features of their architecture, many more monuments must be restored. By no means all or even the majority should be so treated, however, for many are both charming and instructive in their present ruined state. Of equal importance are measures for conservation of monuments in their present state, to stabilize them as ruins and to prevent damage by visitors. The islanders themselves need to form a corps of trained guides of professional quality, familiar with the monuments and the details of the island's history and capable of speaking the languages of the visitors. The usual administrative procedures for management of visitors and protection of monuments are needed. The community at large must come to understand the fundamental economic value of the monuments and the necessity of maintaining the

island as an unspoiled beauty spot. The Chilean Government is highly aware of all these necessities, and they are gradually being met.

For the islanders the future seems as bright as it undoubtedly did in the period before the Poike battle. Yet the specter of overpopulation in this tiny environment is again as powerful as it was then. The old *mana* may have to make a quantum leap of power and understanding in order to avoid a repetition of the earlier catastrophe.



REVIEWS.....

Rongorongo Studies: A forum for Polynesian Philology,
Steven Roger Fischer, Editor. Vol. 1 (1); Summer 1991.
Reviewed by William Liller

The first issue of this biannual (summer/winter) journal starts right off by stating that it "provides a forum for serious scholarship treating of ancient Polynesian chants, songs, tales, legends, myths, genealogies, etc; offers interpretations and reviews of the latest creative literature written in contemporary Polynesian languages; and presents studies in Polynesian linguistics". Splendid! I very much look forward to future issues, even though the editor warns that articles may be in German, French, Spanish, or English. (If not in English, an English abstract must accompany main articles.)

This first slim volume contains three main articles, a short communication, and perhaps most informative of all, a review of *Lei Momi o 'Ewa*, a book (in Hawaiian) by the late Sarah Nakoa published in 1979 and reviewed by John Charlot.

The lead article, "On Hotu Matu'a's Trail: Views of Easter Island", is written (in German) by the esteemed Prof. Dr. Thomas S. Barthel; it is the text of an address made at the opening of the Easter Island Exhibition that was mounted at the Senckenberg Museum in Frankfurt two years ago. Professor Barthel begins by recounting the traditional legend of the discovery of the "Eighth Land", much taken from his book of the same name and based on the so-called "Manuscript E" written early in the century by Islanders. As the abstract puts it, Hotu Matu'a "transcends local historical realities in his paradigmatic exemplification of the Polynesian ethic". Regretfully, my high school German prevented me from savoring all the fine nuances written by one of the world's leading philologists.

The middle article, "Tagaro Seeks Mamalu: Maewo song and migration traditions" is the first part of a highly readable report (in English) by Peter Crowe. It describes field work carried out by the author in the New Hebrides centered around his attempt to learn more about Tangaro, a local

culture-hero who sailed off to the mysterious land of Mamalu. I suppose that the second part of this account will lead us into Polynesia and into the scope of Dr. Fischer's journal.

In the last of the main contributions, "New Images of the Barcelona *Reimiro* and Its Inscription", Francesc Amorós i Gonell describes (in Spanish) this *Rapanui* wood carving which is in the hands of an anonymous private collector. Señor Amorós i Gonell concludes that the Barcelona *reimiro*, thought by some to be from the eighteenth century, is not so old, and he bases his conclusion on his study of the fine superficial incisions along the edge.

The single short contribution, in German, is "The Polynesian Word For Ice" by W.W. Schuhmacher. He leads us from New Zealand to Hawaii (which both have snow-capped peaks) noting the few instances where there is a word for ice such as in Tonga where they have heard stories of *tai fatu*, or "ocean stones". Dr. Schuhmacher's contribution made pleasant, light reading, even with my rudimentary knowledge of German.

If this first issue of *Rongorongo Studies* is any indication, we can look forward to a series of interesting articles on a wide variety of topics concerning Polynesia and neighboring islands. However, I should report that Señor Amorós i Gonell already has written about the Barcelona *reimiro* at greater length and in this journal (*RNJ* Vol. 3, No. 3).

And I hope, too, that in future issues Dr. Fischer can persuade Professor Barthel to make it easier on those of us who find his elegantly turned phrases difficult to translate. I happen to know that he has total command of English, and I humbly beg him to disseminate his immense wisdom in this, the internationally accepted language of science.

Finally, a trivial request: Having often enjoyed reading my "Summer" issue of *RNJ* while shivering by the fireplace during the chilly Chilean winter, I urge Drs. Lee and Fischer to try to come up with a less irksome way of identifying issues than by name of northern hemisphere season. I'm sure that many (but not all) of my Polynesian friends stand with me.

State and Perspectives of Scientific Research in Easter Island Culture, Heide-Margaret Esen-Baur, ed. Courier
Forsch-ungsinstitut Senckenberg 125. Frankfurt am Main.
1990. Reviewed by Alison M. Smith, Ph.D.

This publication contains 23 papers written by 25 authors. Illustrated with black & white photographs and line drawings, it is a well-designed book of 237 pages, on quality paper; soft cover, no index.

The four-day symposium held in Frankfurt in August 1989 and hosted by the Senckenberg Museum brought together 23 scientists and 6 invited guests, and forms the basis for the book. Edited by Esen-Baur, the dispatch with which this publication has appeared is remarkable; one can only wish

that other symposium papers could be so speedily printed and distributed. On the down side, there are some annoying misspelled words (and/or typos) that should have been caught by a simple run-through with a spelling checker.

In her Introduction, Esen-Baur notes that the gathering at Frankfurt may be considered as a follow-up of the *congreso* held on Easter Island in 1984 (an important meeting but now, seven years later, we are still awaiting the publication of most of the papers that were presented).

The Frankfurt workshop focused on ethnology, not archaeology; thus this publication deals with language, ethnographic collections, island flora, etc. With the exception of Liller's paper, readers looking for information on current archaeological or anthropological research will not find it here. This bias was deliberate. As Esen-Baur states, "Research dealing with the culture of Easter Island must not end with numbers, measurements, typologies. We need to know the spiritual concepts behind observed phenomena." Her plea is that all earnest scholars of Rapanui consult with one another, reduce scientific jealousies, and share information and joint research projects rather than working individually and in isolation.

Esen-Baur suggests that another follow-up meeting (perhaps in North America) be held in the future in order to continue the necessary dialogue among Rapanuiphiles.

A brief survey of the papers is included below.

* **Horst Cain:** Religious terminology of Easter Island and Polynesia (pp.11-22).

Cain discusses the Rapa Nui spiritual background by analyzing certain words in the language: *atua*, *akuaku*, and *varua*. This interesting and highly literate paper gets to the spiritual concepts behind the words.

The next two papers deal with wood carving:

* **Irena K. Fedorova:** Ethnological and folklore data in the symbolic interpretation of Easter Island art objects (pp.23-40).

Carved wood artifacts in the Leningrad Museum are the subject of Fedorova's paper. She leans heavily on the symbolism inherent in the figures and attempts to understand their function in the ancient society by comparing them with other carved objects from other parts of Polynesia. This is an excellent and articulate article, and is profusely illustrated with 14 black and white photographs.

* **David Attenborough:** The first figures to be collected from Easter Island (pp.41-50).

Attenborough's paper is also well-written and is a fascinating detective story revolving around Rapa Nui wood carvings in the Leningrad Museum plus one discovered in New York and previously unreported. He makes a good case for the provenience and postulated method of transport for these artifacts which seemingly left the island with Cook in 1774. The objects are well illustrated for comparative purposes.

* **W.Wilfried Schuhmacher:** The mystery of the Rapanui language (pp.51-62).

Following upon such an auspicious beginning, Schuhmacher's paper is a let-down. His article can be summed up by the old saying, "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." He attempts to show correlations between South America and Rapa Nui on the basis of a few similarities between words, while ignoring the archaeological and anthropological evidence. Severe editing would have helped this paper considerably as the author attempts to dazzle the reader by tossing everything into the mix as he takes us on a smorgasbord tour of the world from Ireland to the Kwakiutl of the Northwest Coast to the lost Basque seamen to Albania...and on to the Hittites, finding improbable connections in word similarities.

Clearly unaware of recent archaeology and anthropology, Schuhmacher is still dragging in Heyerdahl's long-discredited theory of settlement from South America. Linguistics do not exist in a vacuum.

* **Olaf Blixen:** La profecía de Renga Varevare a Te Niu (pp.63-72).

Blixen recounts two versions of a native prophecy that foretold the arrival of many new things to the island, such as the horse, wood houses, etc. These have similarities to other predictions that appeared elsewhere in the Pacific at the time when missionary activities were spreading. Blixen suggests that it was the missionaries themselves who fostered these prophecies.

* **Thomas S. Barthel:** Wege durch die Nacht (Rongorongo-Studien auf dem Santiagostab) (pp.73-112).

Barthel cites success in linking *rongorongo* signs and, for the first time, he has discovered "objective structure" on the Santiago staff. He claims to have identified a coherent information sequence running through the text, calling it the Polynesian Book of the Dead; as such it transmits secret knowledge of the King of Easter Island. One can only wish that Barthel would put his words in English so that more readers might examine his work more closely.

* **Jean Guiart:** Problems of methods in Interpreting Easter Island data (pp.113-114).

Guiart's brief paper describes ways of interpreting data from Polynesia. He notes that, when Pacific islanders made signs, these signs dealt with social status or genealogies (which are one and the same). He cites 19th century examples of Pacific islanders spontaneously putting this kind of information into newly acquired writing techniques with lists of personal names, place names, genealogies.

* **Jacques Vignes:** Is a new approach to the decipherment of *rongorongo* writing necessary? (pp.115-120).

Vignes' contribution deals with a plea for a new strategy for deciphering *rongorongo*: use of computerized symbols. He states that the linguistic approach has been (and will be) fruitless without the graphic techniques he advocates.

* **Charles M. Love:** The Katherine Routledge notes and photos, their importance for Easter Island (pp.121-122).

Love's short paper describes the surviving portions of the Routledge collection that were deposited with the Royal Geographical Society in 1929.

* **Francisco Mellén Blanco:** Cartografía histórica de la Isla de Pascua en el Siglo XVIII, Acompañada de algunos datos etnológicos y arqueológicos (pp.123-138).

Mellén Blanco brings together a variety of interesting maps and facts. One map drawn by the Spanish shows three *moai* with *pukao*; the statues have an inverted V drawn on their surface and small circles on the upper side. A reference by one of the Spanish officers mentions that burnt bones were on the *pukao*. The article concludes with 8 photographs (contributed by C.Love) showing the excavations at Ahu Tautira that revealed bones inside a *pukao*, thus verifying the early report.

* **Charles M. Love:** How to make and move an Easter Island statue (pp.139-140).

* **Pavel Pavel:** Reconstruction of the transport of *moai* (pp. 141-144).

The old problem of how the *moai* were moved is discussed by two men who have experimented with the dynamics of statue transport. The first paper, by Love, deals with his eight ton cement replica and the ways in which it was moved; Pavel's cement statue weighed in at 12 tons. So far, so good. However, this reviewer has seen video footage of the moving of the actual statue at Tongariki by Pavel and Heyerdahl which chillingly shows someone climbing onto the unprotected statue to attach ropes, and the rocking of the *moai* as it is inched along. I have also personally observed great chips taken out of the base as the result of this test which left the statue precariously unsupported. The use of actual statues for such experimental activity is, in my opinion, deplorable and inexcusable.

* **William Liller:** The lost observatories of Rapa Nui (pp. 145-160).

Liller's paper brings up to date the results of his research into the astronomical orientations of various *ahu* on Rapa Nui. His paper describes inland *ahu* that were oriented solstitially and coastal *ahu* that were oriented equinoctially. The precision of the orientations is impressive, indicating both a high level of expertise and sound knowledge of the motions of sun and stars. This is an important paper and a "must read" for anyone interested in archaeoastronomical matters.

* **Heide-Margaret Esen-Baur:** Aim and concept of the Easter Island exhibit in Frankfurt (pp.161-170).

* **Francina Forment:** Aim and concept of the Easter Island exhibit in Brussels (pp.171-178).

The two European Easter Island exhibitions--Frankfurt and Brussels--were not carbon-copy presentations (see *RNJ* 3(3):1,7;1989, *RNJ* 4(2):26-7;1990, and *RNJ* 4(4):59-

60;1990/91). These papers describe and illustrate the differing aims and distinctive features of each of them. Esen-Baur's contribution includes 14 photographs plus a floor plan to accompany the discussion of the Frankfurt exhibit; four photos and a floor plan from the Brussels exhibit are shown by Forment.

* **Mónica Bahamondez Prieto:** Acciones de conservación en Isla de Pascua (pp.179-182).

* **Michael Roth:** The conservation of the *moai* "Hanga Kio'e": Methods and consequences of the restoration (pp.183-188).

These two papers describe conservation efforts on the island. Bahamondez' paper concerns conservation treatments oriented to the preservation of statues and the paintings of Ana Kai Tangata and Orongo. Roth details techniques used in the treatment of the statue at Hanga Kio'e and he reports on the condition of the *moai* after 1½ years. One of the key factors in stone treatment is that the statues must be dry prior to application of the chemical agent.

The final six papers in the volume deal with the flora of the island.

* **Georg Zizka:** Changes in the Easter Island flora: comments on selected families (pp.189-208).

* **Björn Aldén:** Wild and introduced plants on Easter Island: A report on some species noted in February 1988 (pp.209-216).

* **Maurice Arnold, Michel Orliac and Hélène Valladas:** Données nouvelles sur la disparition du palmier (cf. *Jubaea*) de l'Ile de Pâques (pp.217-220).

* **Catherine Orliac:** *Sophora toromiro*, one of the raw materials used by Pascuan carvers: some examples in the collections of Musée de l'Homme (pp.221-228).

* **Wolfram Lobin:** *Sophora toromiro* in the Botanical Garden University Bonn (pp.229-232).

* **Hans-Jörg Jacobsen and Georg Dohmen:** Modern plant biotechnology as a tool for the reestablishment of genetic variability in *Sophora toromiro* (pp. 233-237).

Zizka's erudite paper discusses five of the plant families on the island that have been affected in various ways by man. This contribution would have a wider audience if the plants had been identified in laymen's terms for non-botanists.

Aldén does give some helpful common terms and his chosen examples are those that have not appeared in print previously.

Arnold, M.Orliac and Valladas focus on the giant palm, discussing the dates obtained from Carbon-14 dating attempts. They suggest that some destructive parasite or climatic condition may have killed the palms as they find it hard to believe that people would knowingly destroy all their palm trees. [They must not be aware of what is happening in the Brazilian rain forest.]

C.Orliac's paper describes scanning electron microscopic tests of wood from Easter Island carvings that are now in the

collection of the Musée de l'Homme. These tests were made in order to better study the native flora and will hopefully allow for the identification of genuine Polynesian works. Of the items tested, seven were found to have been made of *Sophora toromiro*.

Lobin deals with the *Sophora toromiro* and projected plans to re-introduce this tree to Easter Island. Oddly enough, the *toromiro* must now adapt itself to the island; past attempts to replant have not been promising.

Jacobsen and Dohmen's research deals with attempts to regenerate *Sophora toromiro in vitro* from plant cell and tissue culture. By this means, it may be possible to enhance genetic variability.

Despite a few shortcomings, this publication is an important one and it is a book that scholars of Rapa Nui should have on their library shelf.

Address: Senckenbergische Naturforschende Gesellschaft, Senckenberganlage 25, 6000 Frankfurt am Main 1, Germany.

***Circumpacifica. Festschrift für Thomas S. Barthel.* 2 vols.**

Ilius, Bruno, and Matthia Laubscher (eds.), Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang. 1990. Vol 1: 643 pp.; vol.2: 493 pp. ISBN 3-8204-1528-9. Price: ca. DM 560.

Reviewed by Steven R. Fischer, Ph.D.

With 57 articles by the world's leading ethnologists, *Circumpacifica* represents the most comprehensive ethnological festschrift to appear in German-speaking countries in the second half of the 20th century. It is dedicated to a remarkable man who is no stranger to Rapanuiphiles; Prof. Dr. Thomas S. Barthel, who for thirty years directed the Institute for Ethnology in Tübingen, Germany, and who visited Rapanui in 1956-1957 and has published many books and articles on our beloved island, as well as a great number of other scholarly works which have defined his paramount role in international ethnology. *Circumpacifica* is a remarkable tribute to this exceptional personality. Volume 1 treats of Central and South America, volume 2 Oceania and miscellaneous topics. According to language, there are 29 German contributions, 22 English, 3 French, and 3 Spanish. The listings in the Tabula Gratulatoria reach from Leningrad to Hamburg to Honolulu, with 100 Germans, 12 further Europeans, and 25 overseas congratulators. The high standard of the articles is ensured by the quality of contributing scholars. Barthel's own appraisal of the work: "Sie ist würdig, sie kann sich sehen lassen" ("It is of merit, it is presentable"). Particular attention should be drawn to the Barthel bibliography, divided into critical, commentated spheres of interest and appended with an admirable listing of all Barthel manuscripts to be found in various archives. This is a major work of importance, which,

if perhaps too dear for the home desk, nevertheless must not be missing on the shelf of the university, museum, or institute library.

***Sky Pirates* [The Curse of the Moai]**

Film Review by Paul G. Bahn, Ph.D.

Has it ever struck you, dear *RNJ* readers, what a marvellous movie location Easter Island would make? And how odd it has not yet featured in, for example, the James Bond series as the secret headquarters of some fiendish mastermind bent on world destruction? Rano Kau or Rano Raraku would have made a far more impressive fake crater than the one used in *You Only Live Twice*...

Well, Easter Island has indeed been used as a movie location. Some time ago a friend told me she had rented the video of an Australian film, *Sky Pirates*, part of which took place on the island. Since then I have been trying in vain to find the video in Britain and the USA. Even friends in Australia had never heard of it and could not find a copy.

By chance, it recently surfaced on regional TV in Britain, and I was able to see why it had proved so elusive. The TV listings called it "tatty", and the hour it was broadcast (3:45 a.m.) indicated how highly it was regarded. Another listing called it a "Down Under attempt to mimic the success of the Indiana Jones series. There's a time warp too--the pity is that the movie didn't fall into it"! In fact, these assessments proved far too generous.

This is undoubtedly one of the worst movies ever made. Directed by one Colin Eggleston in 1985, and starring those world-famous actors John Hargreaves and Meredith Phillips, *Sky Pirates* is a messy mixture without a single original idea. It brings together Von Däniken, Berlitz and Spielberg and even rips off *The Deer Hunter* (Russian roulette) and *Dirty Harry* ("How many clicks have there been? In the excitement I kinda lost count myself...do you feel lucky?").

The major source of material, however, is *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Our square-jawed hero (Flight Lieutenant Harris) may not have Indie's hat or whip, but he is full of derring do, buckling his swash all over the place, fighting baddies, rescuing the kidnapped heroine, jumping onto a fast-moving truck and ejecting the driver, wrestling with a damaged plane (despite his fear of heights), and so forth. The heroine is inevitably pretty (like Karen Allen in *Raiders*), but also very tough and resourceful (ditto) and looks great in a skimpy white outfit (ditto). They make a formidable team as they search for her missing father and then pursue the baddies to prevent a catastrophe.

You see, as the movie's opening explains, the earth was visited in ancient times by extraterrestrials who left behind traces such as Stonehenge and also many secrets, 'the legacy of the gods'. In particular there was a big sacred stone tablet,

hidden in a subterranean cavern, which held the key to all earthly power and knowledge. Somehow it got broken into three pieces and two of these were stolen by grave robbers.

In the opening scene, captioned 'Easter Island March 1886', we see the robbers at work in a cave, digging beneath a great *moai*, which then falls onto one of them (this presumably explains how they only managed to get away with two of the three fragments). One wonders why they picked on 1886--are they casting aspersions on Thomson and the USS *Mohican*??

I won't bore you with all the subsequent plot. Suffice it to say that in August 1945 Harris has to fly Savage (the chief baddie) and the heroine's father (a scholarly cleric who already possesses one fragment) to Washington via Bora Bora. The cleric shows photographs of Easter Island including one of a row of erect *moai*, pretty amazing for 1945! The tablet-fragment activates and they hit a kind of time warp, disappearing from radar screens, and seeing *moai* spinning through the air towards them. After ditching in the ocean (and losing the fragment in its crate), they find they are surrounded by wrecks and deserted ships, including the USS *Idaho* which had disappeared when taking part in the Philadelphia Experiment into anti-matter and invisibility: this is 'El Mar de los Barcos Perdidos'. They read the *Idaho*'s log which ends with the words "sighted some giant stone heads on a distant island. The Captain and crew going ashore."

Our heroes look through their binoculars and see a line of stone statues, and then some Rano Raraku heads. The cleric announces, "I thought so, the Isla de Pascua. I know of only three such places on the globe--the Bermuda Triangle, the Devil Sea, and El Mar de los Barcos Perdidos off the coast of Easter Island". As they realize they are several thousand miles off course and "we were brought here", the island disappears, perhaps in a vain attempt to escape this bullshit.

Later in the film, after Harris and the cleric's plucky daughter have teamed up, she explains that the second fragment is with a professor on Bora Bora (nobody explains how or why), and the third is on Easter Island somewhere. "Dad believes that the ancient people of Easter Island had magical powers, could move mountains, levitate stone structures". If the three fragments can be reunited, they will be a source of unlimited power for good or evil. "If Savage gets to Easter Island before you do, who knows what forces he'll unleash?" But beware, there is a curse (of course): "He who disturbs the sacred *moai* will feel the hand of death".

Well, anyway, they borrow a sea-plane, retrieve the sunken crate, find her father, visit the already murdered professor on Bora Bora, and then progress to Easter Island, where we finally see them all running around among the statues on the outer slope of Rano Raraku, as well as in front of Akivi. They enter the great cave (which contains a snake, lots of mummies, including the crew of the *Idaho*, golden idols, and

a 'library', a "repository of ancient stone books"--how come Thor Heyerdahl never found this stuff?) As the baddie digs out the missing fragment and fits it to the others, the fallen sacred *moai* re-erects itself, glows brightly, and then disintegrates him. The pieces are now home where they belong, and our heroes emerge from the cave (possibly the entrance of Ana Kai Tangata) and walk off into the sunset at Tahai.

All in all, one of the worst movies I've ever seen--not only for the bad continuity and unexplained jumps in the plot, but also for the blatant rip-offs from far superior movies, and of course for helping to maintain the public's view of Easter Island as a place of mystery linked with spacemen, levitation, and now even the Bermuda Triangle and the Philadelphia Experiment too.

The island deserves far better, and it is to be hoped that some moviemaker with more imagination and integrity will one day shoot a film here that projects a more realistic and positive image while bringing in some much-needed currency and attracting more and better-informed tourism. The curse of Easter Island is that it is used and abused in garbage like *Sky Pirates*. ■

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OUR READERS RESPOND.....

RAPANUI IS RAPA NUI IS RAPA-nui is RAPA-NUI is....!

The recent claim that *Rapa Nui* is the "correct" spelling of the name of the island, its language, and its people, and that *Rapanui* is a "stubborn error", not only indirectly impugns generations of historical personalities and serious scholars of the island (Eyraud, Roussel, Zumbohm, Jaussen, Churchill, Routledge, Estella, Schulze-Maizier, Chauvet, Lanyon-Orgill, Englert, Barthel, Campbell, Blixen, Fedorova, Mulloy, Rapu, Green, McCall, and many more) but it is a tendentious fallacy requiring immediate correction.

For the singular appeal to island-internal phonological, morphosyntactic and distributive evidence and native speaker reaction intentionally ignores the real indicators of a standard toponymic or demonymic orthography: historical usage and international convention. In this regard both *Rapa Nui* and *Rapanui* are currently "correct".

The name is documented for the first time in Père Laval's 1863 handwritten memoirs (SSCC, Rome) as *Rapa-nui*, a form claiming ca. 20% of all historical citations of this name. This 20% frequency is, however, also claimed by the forms *Rapa-Nui* and *Rapa Nui*. But *Rapanui* displays a 40% frequency of usage.

Writing this into usage by century reveals a different picture. *Rapa-nui* and *Rapa-Nui* were by far the most popular spellings of this name in the 19th century but have since become rare (Métraux, Armandy, Fuentes, Castex, Heyerdahl). *Rapa Nui*, first used in England in 1869, was seldom written in the 19th century (Thomson and Cooke were exceptions) but became more frequent following World War I and increasingly so within the last 20 years because of sudden and intense Chilean attention, the form *Rapa Nui* an orthographic analog to Chilean toponymic convention (Rio Grande, Punta Colorada, Carrera Pinto, etc.), the islanders themselves then merely following the Chilean prescription. The form *Rapanui* distributes evenly in both centuries.

Which form of the name should be used then? For I am also personally in favor of standardizing the island's Polynesian name once and for all--as Grant McCall already called for back in 1981--and jettisoning the ponderous "Easter" legacy with its many confusing translations. *Rapanui* and *Rapa-Nui* we can dismiss because hyphenated names really no longer are acceptable to international orthographic convention (for place names). This leaves us *Rapa Nui* or *Rapanui*.

Rapa Nui would follow Chile's current official line and what is being exhorted on the island today. *Rapanui* would represent the most frequent (double that of *Rapa Nui*) and most evenly distributed historical spelling and would also follow pan-Polynesian convention in which toponyms are

generally, but not always, written together (Honolulu, Pape'ete, Savai'i, Rotorua).*

Ultimately, the choice of *Rapa Nui* or *Rapanui* becomes a personal--and a political--decision.

I have made my choice. I stand with Grant McCall here. I, too, endorse the pan-Polynesian form of the name: *Rapanui*.

For *Rapanui* is first and foremost a Polynesian island.

Steven R. Fischer, Germany

* Compare the Polynesian place names Hokonui, Hurunui, Kakanui, Matakauui, Mokihinui, Papanui, Purakaunui, Rewanui, Tahunanui, Tapanui, Totaranui, Wainui, Whanganui, Wharanui, Whekenui (South Island, New Zealand); Wanganui (population 38,000), Kaupokonui, Kuranui, Mangonui, Omarunui, Pauatahanui, Taumarunui, Tinui, Urenui, Wainui (2x), Wainuiomata, Waitahanui (North Island, NZ); Fa'anui on Bora Bora; Moananui and Tapunui on Tongareva (Penrhyn); Te Enui on Atiu (Cooks); Mairenuui on Tahiti; Potiainui on Ua Pou (Marquesas); Manui (Gambiers); Pu'u Keanui and Kawainui on Hawai'i; Kaliaiinuui and Manawainui on Maui; Kahawainui, Kamananui, Kawainui (2x), Awanui, Konahuanui, and Kaluanui on O'ahu. As examples of divided spelling with *nui* in Polynesia I have only been able to discover Huahine Nui as one of the islands of Huahine (the other is Huahine Iti), and the islet Wahine Maka Nui near Hilo (Hawai'i).

Dear Editor:

Concerning our "Hyphenic row", I cannot add anything to Fisch-er's excellent note about Rapa Nui vs. Rapanui, in reply to Web-er's plea for formalism....Correctness of spelling is a fairly new concept, especially in Engl-ish where there are still some transatlantic disputes (e.g., color vs colour; defence vs defense, etc.). If linguists had their way, we would write with a phonetic alphabet, as the playwright George Bernard Shaw advocated. Web-er's note in your Summer 1991 issue fails to realize that linguistics itself is a social artifact, arbitrary and in the end descriptive of actual practice, unless we are to succumb to an authoritarian "Academy" approach.

Insofar as Rapanui is more akin to a Polynesian rendering and makes sense as a unitary place-name, I continue to favour it. The alternative is a proliferation of hyphens in Rapanui texts and maps which whilst gratifying an unaesthetic linguistic eye, will render a pleasing language ridiculous. At least, that's how we see it in Syd-ney, Aus-tral-i-a. Is Web-er an example of that Theo-dore Roose-velt once called a "Hyphenated American"?

Grant McCall, Australia.

Dear Editor:

I'll throw in my own opinion, which is for the use of "Rapa Nui" for the geographical place; "Rapanui" for the language and the islanders as an ethnic group. I'm sure this is calculated to offend practically everyone!

Besides Englert, the use of "Rapanui" as one word, referring to the language, goes back to Roussel (1908) and Churchill (1912). In Spanish at least it doesn't seem to be a sin to make a one-word adjective out of a two-word geographical name. See for example: Costa Rica > *costarricense*; Puerto Rico > *puertorriqueño*. These are both in the dictionary. However, *neuvayorquista*, which I've also heard, is not.

Emily Ross Mulloy, Wyoming.

[Editor's note: this controversy clearly has brought out the beast in some of our readers, and a few have responded rather poetically:]

Weber says Rapa Nui, and Fischer says Rapanui,
This is screwy, and I say Phooey.
Nui, -nui, hooey, Phooey.
Let's call the whole thing off. [Paul Bahn, England.]

Poems written down after reading the arguments of the good Doctors Fischer and Weber, with the humble apologies of an a-nony-mous *rapanuiphile*:

In a Schwarzwaldhochstrassebierkeller
Sat a philological feller.
He cried out, "Terrific!
For islands Pacific
I'll be the official name speller".

He declared "Starting now, Rapanui
Is correct and all others are hooey.
Maungapuakatiki!
And Ahuheki'i!
We'll adopt them. Now don't we or do we?"

At a bar in a New York saloon
Near a shadowy West Side commune,
Another sat plotting
And writing and jotting
Down names like Ta Hai and Ran Goon.

As a boy he was taught that you never
Joined disparate words up together.
He exclaimed, "Paint graf iti
All over Tah Iti!
Let's legalize my way forever."

About nothing they make such ado.

One is right and the other ta boo.

Who's to say which is best, 'n'

It's all a tempést in

The crater of Ranoraráku.

Editor's note: The solution proposed by Mrs Mulloy seems eminently sensible and either will outrage everyone and/or please at least half of our readers. We will adopt her suggestion and use Rapa Nui for the geographical place and Rapanui for the people and the language.

Response to Fischer's review, by Robert R. Koll

Fischer (*RNJ* 4(3):44-45;1990) begins his critique: "A recent article by Robert Koll...unwittingly demonstrates what confusion can ensue when imagination obtains over erudition. Koll's erroneous statements and hypotheses must be addressed, if only to do justice to the contribution of so many generations of earnest scholars of the classical *rongorongo* script of Rapanui." The purpose of my article was to demonstrate that imagination combined with some erudition can result in new concepts.

Fischer states "...*rongorongo* does not mean the hieroglyphic writing...[but] means,...chants, recitations, etc. and those that teach and perform [them]." Englert, however, indicates that *rongorongo* also meant the script incised on wooden tablets which was read by priests skilled in the art of reading and writing the script. He defines *rongorongo* in the following ways: "Recitation; the script of the island"; "The old and complete name for the tablets (*ko hau motu mo rongorongo* or "lines of script for recitation"); The incised symbols [are] a method of picture writing; The scholars who knew the art of writing and reciting the inscriptions were called "*maori ko hau rongorongo*, *maori* being the honorific title used by masters of any craft" (Englert 1970:74,178).

Although Fischer claims "The writing itself had no generic name on *Rapanui*, bearing only those of several names of the respective type of recitations," Englert (1970:76) lists: "hymns in honor of Makemake, records....dedications to those who fell in wars and possibly genealogical records."

Metraux (1957:186) lists far more classifications for the hieroglyphic script than is mentioned by Fischer. The chanters, *tangata rongorongo*, knew genealogies of hymns and oral traditions. Students chanted the circumstances of life, love and death. Other chants had the power to save people in danger and to multiply plants and animals and help defeat the enemy. Metraux (ibid:188) further defines *kohau* as a reciting or chanter's staff, not simply "wood, stem, or stick."

Thus it appears that *rongorongo* is an adjective used to qualify the written language, the inscribed wooden tablets, as well as those who wrote, read and recited it.

Routledge (1919:243) has a wide horizon of detailed information about the subjects of the *rongo-rongo* script incised on the tablets: "With regard to other *kohau* a list was obtained of the subjects with which they were believed to deal. These amounted to thirteen in all, most of the names being given by several persons"; and "Every clan had professors in the art who were known as *rongo-rongo* men. Every year there was a great gathering of *rongo-rongo* men at Anakena...." (ibid:245).

Fischer claims "There is no evidence that sharpened frigate bird bones were used to carve the *rona* on the wooden *kohau*..." However, Metraux (1957:189) states they "...sharpened their styles of frigate bird's bones." Other styles are mentioned: shark's teeth or obsidian gravers (ibid:184); Heyerdahl (1989:83) mentions rat's teeth used as styles.

Fischer states: "Barthel did not record '605 distinct *rongo-rongo* glyphs', demonstrating with this that these *rona* were pictographic rather than alphabetic letters and thus the tablets were mnemonic devices..." Barthel actually concluded (1958:314): "From ca.120 basic components one can generate some 1500-2000 constructions." The article continues: "This large number demonstrates that they were pictographic rather than alphabetic letters and thus the tablets were mnemonic devices used for chants or story telling as an aid to delivering recitations by rote."

Fischer adds that "It does Routledge an injustice to misquote her as saying only that the tablets disappeared as a result of 'the introduction of Christianity' and that the natives said they had burnt the tablets in compliance with the orders of the missionaries" (Routledge 1919:207). Routledge actually declares this disappearance to coincide with the Peruvian raids and subsequent epidemics and correctly documents that "the Fathers, on the contrary, state that it was due to them that any were preserved. Some certainly were saved by their means..." (ibid.). The Fathers did not deny the islanders' statement about burning the tablets. Instead, they countered with "it was due to them that any were preserved." Yet, in their attempt to obliterate the tablets as the last vestige of paganism, a pitiful remnant survived which the Fathers claim credit for salvaging.

Fischer states: "Yet Koll's Achilles' heel would have to be his bold allegations that the 'starting point of the text' of any *rongo-rongo* inscription is still 'unclear'...one should at least acknowledge the impeccable objective logic of Harrison in this regard..." However, the following from the Harrison quotation is incorrect: "...the signs on the top line of each tablet, on both faces stand upside down..." In *Rongo-rongo* boustrophedon, the glyphs on every other line are upside down. So if the glyphs on the top line are upside down those on the next line must be right side up. Harrison is mistaken in the following part of the quotation: "...it seems probable that the bottom line on each tablet, where it will be seen, the signs stand upright, is intended to be read first." It is not

axiomatic that, because the glyphs on the top line may be upside down, those on the bottom line will be upright. If a side of a tablet has an even number of lines the position of the glyphs on the bottom line will be opposite of those on the top line. Conversely, if the side has an odd number of lines the position of the glyphs on both top and bottom will be the same. Rongo-rongo tablets can be read from the top line down or from the bottom line up. Harrison does not explain why he decided the bottom line was "...intended to be read first" nor how he chose the "starting point" from the eight possible lower left hand corners of a tablet.

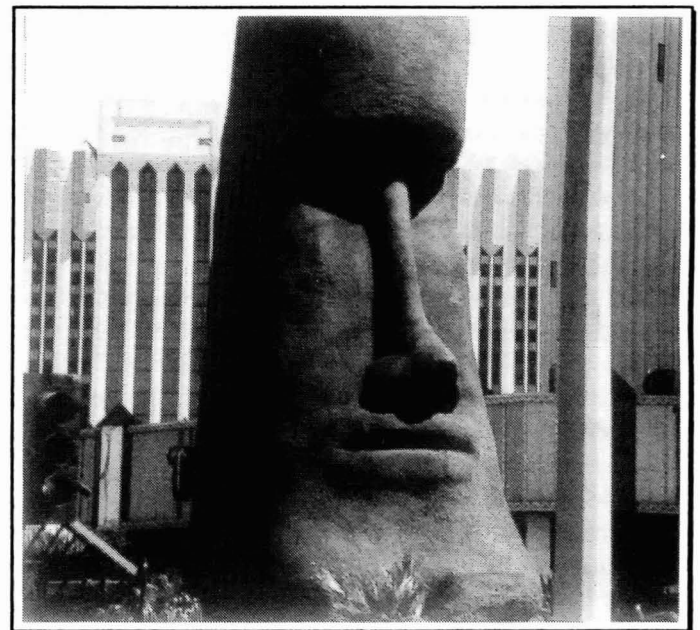
Until the *rongo-rongo* script is either deciphered or some unknown concept of comprehending it is conceived, Englert's (1970:73) thought will have to suffice: "But one remarkable product of the old culture is still enveloped in true clouds of mystery and may remain so forever. This is the Easter island script." So, the injustice to the "contributions of so many generations of earnest scholars..." is not as dire as Fischer's accusations suggest.

R. Koll, Ajijic, Mexico

REO ROA-ROA.....

Just when you thought it was safe to go out again...

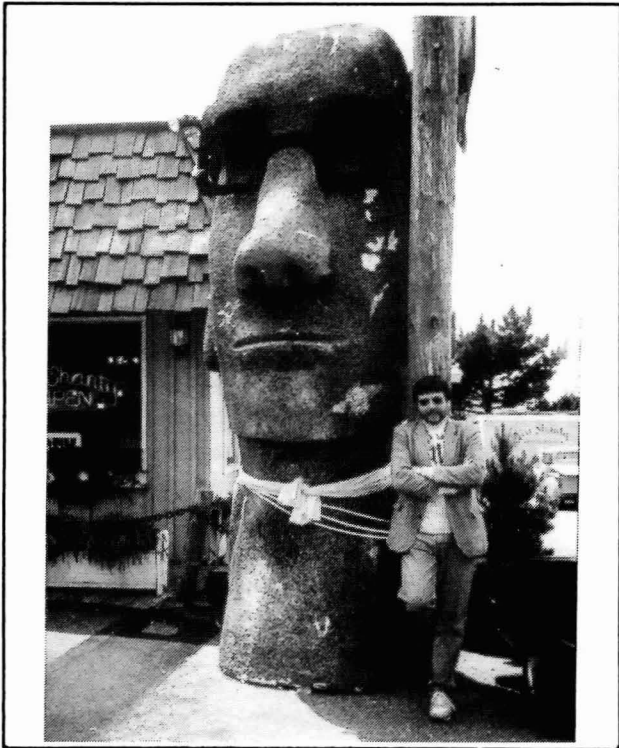
There seems to be no end to the fabricated *Rapanui* images that are appearing at unlikely places around the world. Las Vegas has two gigantic counterfeit *moai* standing outside one of their lavish hotel/casino establishments, surrounded by traffic lights, buses, taxis, and tourists and dwarfing everything but the high rise buildings.



One of the pair of huge *moai* heads in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The moai see you, the moai want you.....

As we reported in *RNJ* Vol. 4(4):61, a herd of *moai* made of styrofoam were assembled on a cliffside field in central California for an Isuzu TV commercial. At the conclusion of the filming, various individuals happily carried them off and they have subsequently become local landmarks. One stands outside the Sea Shanty cafe in Cayucos where Dr. Paul Bahn visited it recently. This *moai* (apparently in deference to the beach environment) wears sun glasses, colored lights, and a large yellow ribbon for a necktie. On the 4th of July, this statue appeared in the local annual--and funky--parade. Still wearing sun glasses, the twenty foot *moai* was painted flesh color and had a surfer body attached to it. It was part of a float made to resemble a boat, which was filled with sailors, mermaids and transvestite native girls. The float was a sensation and beat out the other 84 entries to win the Sweepstakes Prize.



Paul Bahn (on the right) visits the Cayucos *moai* before it received notoriety as the Sweepstakes prize winner in the local Fourth of July parade.

Notice: A Pacific Rim Study Group (PARS), focusing on the South Pacific Rim, with an interdisciplinary character combining natural science and the humanities, has been organized at Risoe National Laboratory, Roskilde, Denmark. If interested, please contact W. Wilfried Schuhmacher, Kirkebakken 13, DK-4621 Gadstrup, Denmark.

WHAT'S NEW IN HANGAROA.....

Doggone--We've got dogs!

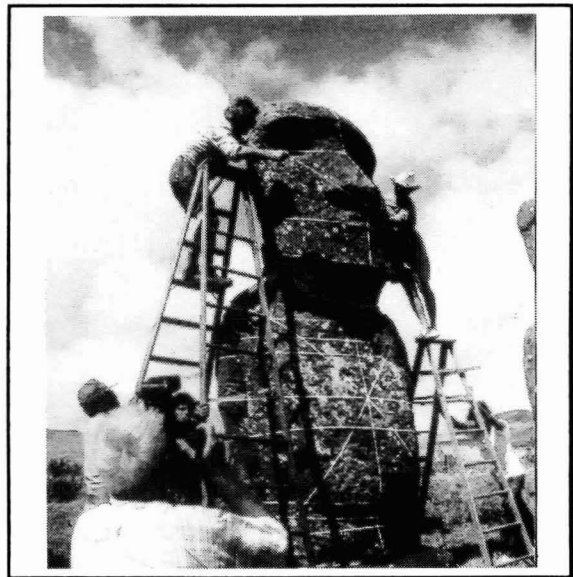
The new director of the Sebastian Englert Museum, Claudio Cristino, has been conducting archaeological excavations at the site of Anakena and his crews have turned up some unexpected finds.

Dog bones were recovered from behind Ahu Nau Nau at a depth of two meters. The bones appear to be prehistoric and some associated charcoal was obtained for dating purposes. The excavations also found porpoise and whale bones.

The field work is continuing under the direction of Patricia Vargas of the Universidad de Chile. If the dog bones prove to be prehistoric, this is indeed big news; it has been long believed that the Polynesian settlers arrived on Rapa Nui without man's best friend.

Photogrammetry of Moai...

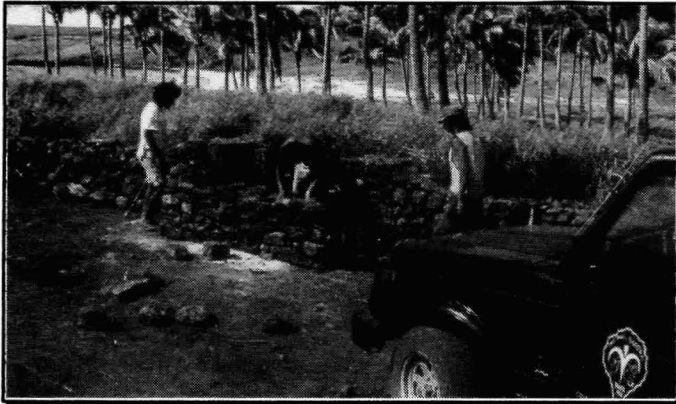
Among the activities of the project "Estatuaria de Isla de Pascua" directed by Dr. J. Van Tilburg, photogrammetrical measurements were made of one of the statues at Akivi by a group of scientists and photographers, assisted by local islanders. These measurements will enable computerized drawings to be made in order to study stylistic features and the manner of statue transportation. This was funded by National Geographic Magazine, and done with consent of the Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales and CONAF.



In the picture, reference lines for photogrammetry are being placed on the statue (photo credit: R. Morales M.).

The saga of Rapa Nui's only paved road continues. The project is beyond deadline, the road is not completed and charges and lawsuits are flying in all directions. Now another problem has arisen: heavy rains are damaging the paving

bricks that have been installed. Each storm uproots some of the bricks which then have to be pulled out and replaced. And one islander has the distinction of being the first to drive his motorcycle into the huge rain gutter that borders the street. Luckily no major injury occurred. This rain gutter has to be seen to be believed; when it rains, the water flow resembles the upper falls on the Blue Nile. You can lose a car in it.



In order to alleviate both parking problems and problems of illegal vehicular traffic at Anakena, a new wall has been constructed and parking spaces have been enlarged. In the photo, CONAF personnel are putting the finishing touches on the new stone wall. (Photo credit: R. Morales M.).



Dr. Heide Margaret Esen-Baur visited Rapa Nui last May for a final evaluation of the consolidation treatments applied to some of the large *moai* on the island. In the photo, Esen-Baur is accompanied by a representative of the Consejo de Ancianos, the provincial chief of SERNATUR and two park guards from CONAF. Photo credit: R. Morales M.).

Festival: Word has been received that the annual festival, Tapati Rapa Nui, has been moved ahead from its earlier date and will now begin on February 7th. This is one great

show, festival, party, parade--all rolled into one. Catch it if you can.



WHAT'S NEW IN POLYNESIA.....

Mangaia: New evidence of prehistoric contact between Polynesia and South America has come from the identification of sweet potato remains more than a thousand years old in the Cook Islands. The plant has long been a staple cultivated food in Hawaii, New Zealand and New Guinea, but at least part of this dispersal is known to have followed European penetration of the Pacific in the 16th century.

The new evidence comes from Tangatatau rock shelter on Mangaia, recently excavated by Dr. Patrick Kirch of the University of California, Berkeley. Radiocarbon dates show the shelter was fairly continuously used from AD 1000 to 1600, and among the plant remains recovered are several specimens of sweet potato, identified by Dr. Jon Hather of the Institute of Archaeology at University College London, using the new scanning electron microscope facility. Carbonised fragments of the tubers have proved difficult to identify by other means.

The specimens come from prehistoric contexts, associated with such artifact types as pearl shell fishhooks and basalt adzes. Dates of AD 988-1155 and 1162-1280 have been obtained as well as later dates in the 14th and 15th centuries. These leave no doubt as to the presence of this cultigen, although its initial introduction still remains unclear.

Easter Island and Hawaii were settled by AD 400 and the Marquesas half a millennium before that, so contact with the Pacific coast of South America could have been established during the first millennium AD. ---by prehistoric Polynesians. [N. Hammond, *London Times*, 12/8/91].

The University of the South Pacific Bulletin (Vol.24, No.21 for June 1991) reports that cases of AIDS have increased in eight Pacific island countries, with 229 persons infected with the virus. These are, however, only officially reported cases. It is estimated that the actual number may be 50 times higher. Although the spread of AIDS in Asia and the Pacific is now at a critical stage, Dr. Michael Merson, director of WHO's global program on AIDS, states that Pacific Island countries have a chance to prevent the spread of this tragic disease as they have a warning that other countries did not have. Stress is placed on the importance of education and safe sex.



EASTER ISLAND FOUNDATION NEWS.....

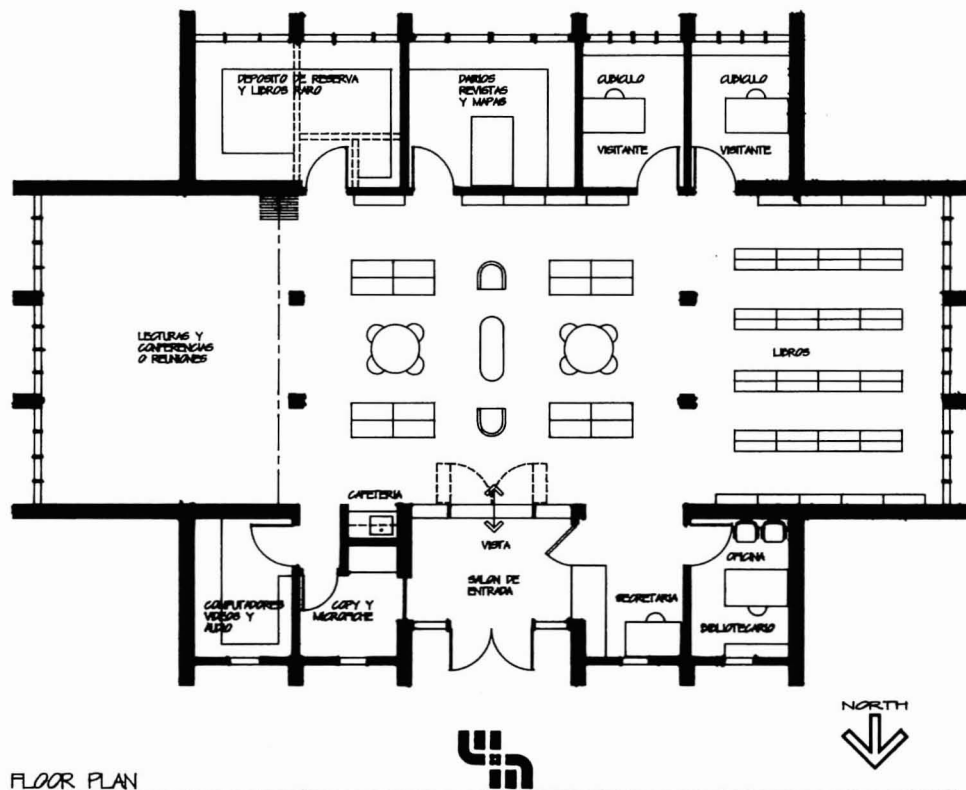
The annual meeting of the Board of Directors of the EIF was held in July 1991 at Los Osos, California. Several major topics were discussed, including the groundbreaking ceremony to be held on the island in October, the architectural plans for the structure, and fund raising activities. The EIF is working closely with the Dirección de Bibliotecas, Archivos, y Museos (Santiago de Chile) and the Amigos de Isla de Pascua, members of which will make up an Advisory Council of the Library Committee.

One of the projects that the EIF hopes to initiate in the near future is a contest for best teacher with a cash award to the winner. Such an award would provide incentives for the teachers with the end result being an upgrade in the quality of education.

The EIF is also initiating a publication program. Various publications will be issued, with the first one due out in October; all proceeds will go to the various projects of the EIF. The first in the *Easter Island Series* is titled *Easter Island: The ceremonial center of Orongo* by Georgia Lee and Alan Drake. This book will describe and illustrate the site of Orongo, the petroglyphs, the archaeology and history of the site, and the birdman cult. Watch *RNJ* for further notice!

Other books in the *Easter Island Series* will follow including *The rongorongo writing tablets* by Alan Drake, *The wood carving tradition* by Joan T. Seaver, *The ancient solar observatories of Rapa Nui* by William Liller, and a volume of collected papers: *Occasional papers of EIF and Rapa Nui Journal*, edited by Georgia Lee and Alan Drake.

Please don't forget the EIF! We need your contributions for the Library, the teachers' award, the publication program, etc. It is tax-deductable; credit cards are accepted. Easter Island Foundation, Box 1319, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272.



FLOOR PLAN

TOTAL AREA
3284 SQUARE METERS
3540 SQUARE FEET

WIRTH + MCCANDLESS AIA ARCHITECTS
666 Dead Cat Alley • Woodland CA 95695

SCALE: 1"=40' 0"

The new William Mulloy Research Library on Rapa Nui will have ample space for research, computers, copy machine, storage of archival materials, private rooms to accommodate visiting scholars, offices for staff, a photographic lab, and a meeting room for small groups. It is designed to accommodate the particular environmental factors of the island, with high ceilings and ventilation. The room in which rare manuscripts and slides will be curated will be air conditioned. The floor plan is the work of Wirth and McCandless AIA Architects.



The spectacular logo on Easter Island Foundation T-shirts was designed by Mark Oliver, Inc. Rapanuiphiles who wish to sport this nifty logo (in three colors) may purchase this T-shirt on Rapa Nui at Hotu Matua's Favorite Shoppe or by sending a \$20 donation to the Easter Island Foundation, Box 1319, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. The logo is in red, blue and yellow on a white T-shirt sizes M,L,XL.



For information or reservations,
call (213) 379-2530 in the U.S.

An Uncommon Guide to Easter Island is still available! This unique guide to Rapa Nui and its archaeological sites contains maps, drawings, 110 full color photos, references, glossary and index. Written by Georgia Lee, Ph.D., the *Guide* is available from International Resources, P.O. Box 840, Arroyo Grande CA 93421-0840.

Price is \$18.95 plus shipping; mention this ad and get free shipping within the U.S. ISBN 0-937480-17-7.

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Georgia Lee, Ph.D. Publisher and Editor

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